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ABSTRACT

Historically black two-year colleges have existed in the United States since 1875, yet little is known about them because they have been largely ignored by educational researchers. Most black two-year schools were founded by religious bodies and were limited geographically to the South. Enrollment in black two-year colleges reached its zenith in 1950-51, when 7,173 students were enrolled in twenty-four schools. These institutions had erratic histories, closing and reorganizing often, sometimes changing from four-year to two-year schools as a part of the retrenchment process. The history of the black two-year colleges is revealed in this paper, as well as some hypotheses regarding the relative obscurity of these institutions as far as research is concerned. A list of more than one hundred historically black two-year colleges that have existed over the past century is included. (AH)

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THE HISTORICALLY BLACK TWO-YEAR COLLEGE: A FORGOTTEN PART OF AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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by

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Even though most authorities on the historically black two-year college estimate that no more than 8,000 students attended these colleges at any one time, the fact that more than one hundred of these institutions existed over the past century suggests that their impact was much greater than has previously been realized. The black population shift from rural Southern America to the centers of large urban areas, desegregation of previously all-white institutions, problems of funding, declining enrollment, and the community college movement all threaten to hasten the demise of the historically black two-year college.

The historically black two-year college located primarily in the South, largely influenced by the segregation policies of the day, shaped in its growth by the customs and attitudes of the local community, built on the religious precepts laid down by its founding fathers, persevered from the end of the Civil War for almost a century over nearly insurmountable obstacles.

No saga in American history offers a more poignant commentary on the will to survive than this tiny institution in its mission to provide an education to a people who had no other place to go to get that education.

The transitory nature of this institution, closing one day, opening and re-organizing as a four-year college, closing again and re-organizing as a two-year college, and sometimes closing permanently, is but a reminder of the debilitating circumstances under which it had to operate.

It has been suggested that probably the very first two-year colleges operating in America were several two-year denominational colleges for Negroes in the South.

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Although consolidating a four-year college program into two years was the most prevalent method of establishing black two-year colleges, it was not the most permanent method. High school elongation or extension from a high school program through the first two years of college work was the most permanent form of establishing black two-year colleges.

Just as the majority of American colleges were founded by religious denominations, the majority of historically black two-year colleges were also established by religious bodies. Among those religious agencies most active in establishing black two-year colleges were: the Congregational Church under the auspices of the American Missionary Association; the Freedman's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church; the American Baptist Home Missionary Society of the Northern Baptist Church; the Presbyterian Church of the United States and the Protestant Episcopal Church.

A number of black religious denominations also founded many black two-year colleges. Among the major churches to establish colleges were: the African Methodist Episcopal Church; the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church; the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church; the National Baptist Convention, Inc.; and the National Baptist Convention of America.

As a subject of study, the historically black two-year college seems never to have attracted much attention by researchers. A number of reasons have been suggested for this lack of attention. First, these institutions were virtually untouched by the mainstream of two-year college expansion and development. The school year 1950-51 stands out as the high-point of student enrollment. Some 7,173 students were enrolled in twenty-four black two-year colleges. This limited number of students was a fraction compared to the almost one million students attending predominantly white two-year colleges.

Secondly, the great majority of black two-year colleges were privately funded. With limited sources of funding, there was little opportunity for growth and ex-

The earliest known documentation of an institution which was later to become an historically black two-year school was Central Tennessee College, later known as Walden College.

Central Tennessee College was established by the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1865 in Nashville, Tennessee. Initially, the college was organized to offer law, medicine, mechanical arts, teacher-training, and household arts. The medical department later became Meharry Medical College, and in 1915 became a separate and distinct school.

During World War I, Walden College closed and in 1919 re-opened as a two-year college.

Two other early educational institutions founded in 1867 that later became two-year colleges were St. Augustine's College, established in Raleigh, North Carolina by the Protestant Episcopal Church and Storer College at Harper's Ferry, West Virginia.

Southern Christian Institute, founded at Hemmingway, Mississippi in 1875, and subsequently moved to Edwards, Mississippi, is generally considered the first historically black two-year college. However, there is some disagreement as to when this institution's two-year college program was first organized. Reorganization dates of 1895, 1900, and 1904 were mentioned.

Morristown Normal and Industrial College at Morristown, Tennessee, was reorganized in 1912, and is generally considered the second historically black two-year college.

The establishing of historically black two-year colleges was so tenuous that many closed before completing the first school term of operation. The most common method of establishing these colleges came about as the result of consolidating a four-year college's program into two years. Because of limited financial resources and tightening accreditation requirements, many four-year colleges used this method as a temporary expedience. As soon as resources were available these institutions again sought status as four-year colleges.

pansion. There appeared to have been little interest in an institution that showed such limited potential for growth.

Thirdly, researchers tended not to show an interest in a phenomenon that was difficult to locate and define.

Finally, black two-year colleges tended to be viewed as institutions that offered less than college-level work. Because of this attitude and non-accredited status of many of these institutions, many investigators were hesitant at examining a phenomenon that had difficulty justifying the legitimacy of its endeavors.

Figure 1 provides a list of more than one hundred historically black two-year colleges that have existed over the past century. Without these institutions many black people would not have had an opportunity for any higher education.

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Fig. 1.--Historically Black Two-Year Colleges

State and Name of College	Date Founded	Location	Control
Alabama			
Alabama Lutheran Academy and College	1922	Selma	Lutheran
Alabama State A&M Institute	1875	Normal	Public
Daniel Payne College	1889	Birmingham	AME
Lomax-Hannon College	1893	Greenville	AMEZ
Miles Memorial College	1931	Birmingham	Methodist
Mobile State Junior College	1965	Mobile	Public
Oakwood Junior College	1895	Huntsville	SDA
Selma University (Formerly Alabama Baptists and Normal Theological School)	1927	Selma	Baptist
Southern Union College	1922	Wadley	Congregationalist
Stillman Institute	1876	Tuscaloosa	Presbyterian
Wenonah State Junior College	1963	Birmingham	Public
Arkansas			
Arkansas Baptist College		Little Rock	Baptist
Arkansas AM&N College (Branch Normal School)	1927	Pine Bluff	Public
Dunbar Junior College	1879	Little Rock	Public
Philander Smith College	1926	Little Rock	Methodist
Shorter College	1885	Little Rock	AME
Delaware			
Delaware State College for Colored Youth	1891	Dover	Public
Florida			
Bethune-Cookman College	1904	Daytona Beach	Methodist
Edward Waters College	1881	Jacksonville	AME
Florida Memorial College	1871	Live Oak	Baptist
Florida Normal and Industrial College	1892	St. Augustine	Baptist
Gibbs Junior College	1957	Petersburg	Public
Hampton Junior College	1958	Ocala	Public
Rivers Junior College	1958	Madison	Public
Roosevelt Junior College	1958	West Palm Beach	Public
Rosenwald Community College	1958	Panama City	Public
Suwannee River Junior College		Madison	Public
Volusia County Community College	1958	Daytona Beach	Public
Washington Junior College	1949	Pensacola	Public
Georgia			
Central City College	1899	Macon	Baptist
Fort Valley Normal and Industrial School	1895	Fort Valley	Public
Georgia Normal and Agricultural College	1904	Albany	Public
State Teachers and Agricultural College	1930	Forsyth	Public
Kansas			
Western University	1877	Kansas City	AME
Kentucky			
Lincoln Institute	1912	Lincoln Ridge	Public
West Kentucky Industrial College	1910	Paducah	Public
Louisiana			
Coleman College	1890	Gibsland	Baptist
Louisiana Normal and Industrial College (Grambling)	1905	Grambling	Public
Straight College	1869	New Orleans	AMA
Maryland			
Carver Junior College	1950	Rockville	Public
Coppin Normal School	1902	Baltimore	Public
Maryland Normal School	1911	Bowie	Public
Princess Anne College	1886	Princess Anne	Public

*AMA American Missionary Association
AME African Methodist Episcopal
AMEZ African Methodist Episcopal Zion
CGC Church of God in Christ
CME Colored Methodist Episcopal
SDA Seventh Day Adventist
UCMS United Christian Missionary Society

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Fig. 1.--Continued

State and Name of College	Date Founded	Location	Control
Mississippi			
Campbell College	1890	Jackson	AME
Central Mississippi College	1903	Kosciusko	Baptist
Coahoma College	1949	Clarksdale	Public
Harris College	1956	Meridian	Public
Holmes Junior College	1802	West Point	Presbyterian
Johnson Memorial College		Batesville	AMEZ
Natchez College	1885	Natchez	Baptist
Okolona Industrial School	1932	Okoloca	Episcopal
Piney Woods County Life School	1935	Piney Woods	Independent
Prentiss Normal and Industrial School	1907	Prentiss	Public
Saints Junior College	1918	Lexington	CGC
Southern Christian Institute	1881	Edwards (Formerly Pemmingway)	Methodist
Utica College	1903	Utica	Public
Missouri			
Lincoln Junior College	1935	Kansas City	Public
Stone Teachers College	1890	St. Louis	Public
North Carolina			
Barber-Scotia College	1879	Concord	Presbyterian
Bennett College for Women	1926	Greensboro	Methodist
Brick Junior College	1895	Brick	AMA
Carver Junior College	1949	Charlotte	Public
Elizabeth City Normal School	1924	Elizabeth City	Public
Immanuel Lutheran College	1903	Greensboro	Lutheran
Kittrell College	1885	Kittrell	AME
Roanoke Institute	1896	Elizabeth City	Baptist
St. Augustine's College	1867	Raleigh	Episcopal
State Normal School	1877	Fayetteville	Public
State Normal School	1889	Elizabeth City	Public
Oklahoma			
Eastern Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College	1928	Wilburton	Public
Oklahoma Junior College for Negroes	1936	Oklahoma City	Public
South Carolina			
Avery Institute	1930	Charleston	Congregationalist
Bettis Academy and Junior College	1881	Trenton	Baptist
Brainerd Institute	1934	Chester	Presbyterian
Brewer Junior College	1872	Greenwood	AMA
Clinton Junior College	1894	Rock Hill	AMEZ
Coulter Memorial Junior College	1933	Cheraw	Presbyterian
Friendship College	1891	Rock Hill	Baptist
Harbeson College (Formerly Ferguson Academy)	1886	Ableville	
Mather College		Beaufort	
Morris College	1907	Sumter	
Seneca Junior College	1926	Seneca	Baptist
Textile Industrial Institute	1927	Spartanburg	Methodist
Vorhees Normal and Industrial School	1879	Denmark	Public
Tennessee			
Chattanooga City College		Chattanooga	Independent
Le Moyne College	1870	Memphis	AMA
Lincoln Institute	1912	Lincoln Ridge	Public
Morristown Normal and Industrial School	1881	Morristown	Methodist
Owen Junior College	1954	Memphis	Baptist
Swift Memorial College	1883	Rogersville	Presbyterian
Walden College (Formerly Central Tennessee College)	1865	Nashville	Episcopal

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Fig. 1.--Continued

State and Name of College	Date Founded	Location	Control
Texas			
Butler College	1907	Tyler	Baptist
Conroe Normal and Industrial College	1903	Conroe	Baptist
Ft. Worth Business and Distributive School	1944	Ft. Worth	Public
Guadalupe College	1837	Seguin	Baptist
Houston Colored Junior College	1927	Houston	Public
Jarvis Christian College	1914	Hawkins	UCMS
Jefferson College	1948	Beaumont	Public
Mary Allen Seminary	1878	Crockett	Presbyterian
Paul Quinn College	1881	Waco	AME
Solomon Coles Junior College	1949	Corpus Christi	Public
Southwestern Christian College	1950	Terrell	Church of Christ
St. Philip's College	1898	San Antonio	Episcopal
Texas College (Formerly Phillips University)	1909	Tyler	CME
Tillotson College	1881	Austin	AMA
Tyler Junior College for Negroes	1953	Tyler	Public
Wharton Junior College for Negroes	1947	Wharton	Public
Virginia			
St. Paul Normal and Industrial School	1888	Lawrenceville	Episcopal
Virginia State College (Norfolk Division)	1882	Norfolk	Public
Virginia Theological Seminary	1888	Lynchburg	Baptist
West Virginia			
Bluefield Institute	1895	Bluefield	Public
Storer College	1867	Harper's Ferry	Baptist

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